



News for Immediate Release

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DWR Report Looks at Climate Change Impact on Water Resources

SACRAMENTO – The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has released a technical report that offers a first look at changes that may affect California’s water resources in the future.

The report, “Progress on Incorporating Climate Change into Management of California’s Water Resources” is an adjunct to an executive order issued by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on June 1, 2005 that sets greenhouse gas reduction goals for California.

“Given the complexity of California’s water system and uncertainties about the impact of climate change, our work is at an early stage,” according to DWR Deputy Director Jerry Johns. “But this report will contribute to an ongoing dialogue on how our systems may need to change in the future as more information becomes available,” Johns said.

Prepared for the Governor and the State Legislature, the DWR paper describes the mathematical modeling of four climate change scenarios and the corresponding results. The report shows that climate change could significantly impact California’s water picture in many ways, including:

- Loss of Sierra snow pack and the seasonal water storage it provides
- More rain and less snow, impacting both water supply reliability and hydropower generation
- More variable precipitation and extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts – the latter resulting in more energy-intensive groundwater pumping
- Rising sea levels that would increase pressure on Delta levees and compound saltwater intrusion into Delta water supplies and coastal aquifers

- Higher water temperatures, possibly affecting listed fish species;
- Changes in annual average State Water Project and Central Valley Project south-of-Delta deliveries.

The climate change report is consistent with the recently-released California Water Plan Update. That report recommends that state agencies work with researchers to monitor, predict and prepare for the effects of global climate change on water systems and the environment.

Copies of DWR's climate change report are available at baydeltaoffice.water.ca.gov. Hard copies can be ordered by contacting Patricia Stanley at (916) 653-4391 or pstanley@water.ca.gov.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.

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